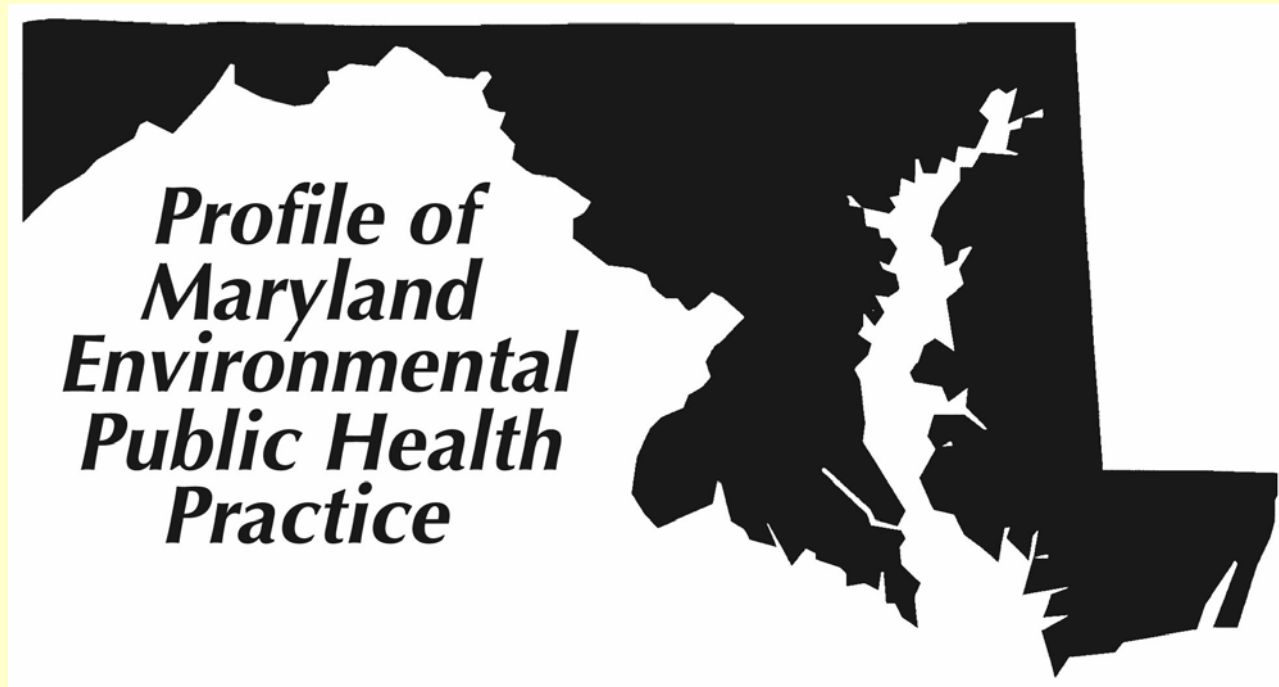


Johns Hopkins Center for Excellence in Community Environmental Health Practice

An Academic-Practice Partnership



**Beth Resnick
Environmental Public Health Tracking
Meeting
Atlanta April 2005**

Project Goal

To assess the capacities and needs of Maryland environmental public health practice, the Center focused its efforts at the local level, where EPH professionals interact with the community on a daily basis and provide the foundation for Maryland's environmental public health protection efforts.



Methods

In 2003-2004, the Center performed site visits to all 24 Maryland local EPH divisions, which provided an overview of responsibilities, strengths, and needs, not only for traditional EPH program areas, but also for emerging issues including preparedness and development.

A discussion guide/assessment tool was created to accompany the site visits in order to collect additional quantitative information about existing EPH infrastructure capacities, agency needs, training, workforce development, and technical and legal support as well as existing and future challenges to local EPH practice.

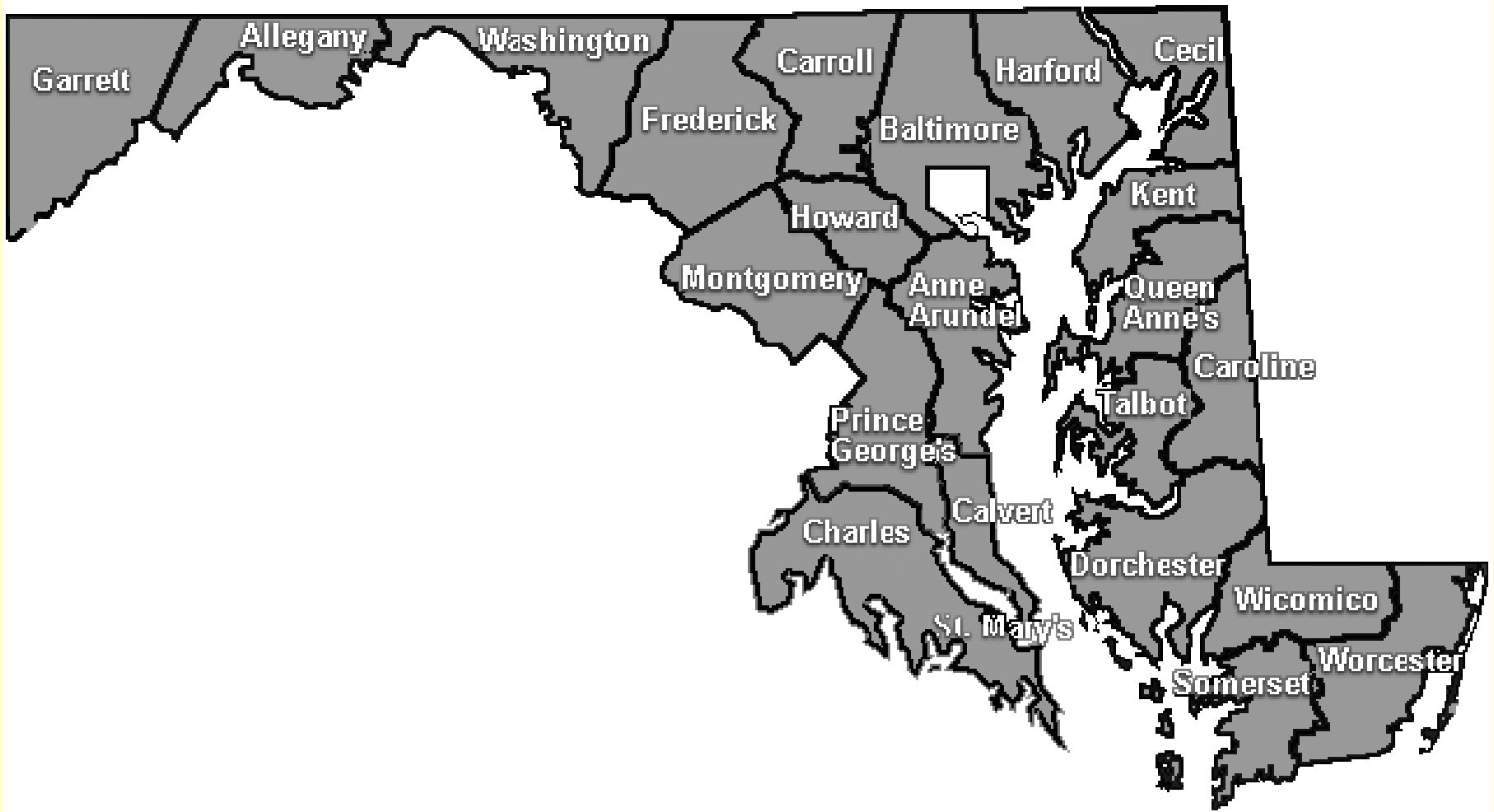


Results

By spring of 2004, the Center had conducted site visits to all 24 local EPH divisions and received completed discussion guides from 22 of 24 divisions, a 92 percent response rate.



Maryland Counties



The Many Faces of Maryland



Maryland Environmental Public Health Strengths

- **Strong local county health department structure throughout the state**
- **Effective collaboration/cooperation among county health departments**
- **Communication systems in place
(e-mail, satellite downlinks, internet)**
- **Systems available to work together at state and local levels
(EH Local Liaison Committee, Roundtable)**
- **Dedicated workforce that is responsive to community needs**

Growth and Development



- **Political pressures**
- **Timeliness**
- **Fees**
- **Population increases**

Emergency Preparedness

- **Defined roles/responsibilities**
- **Additional training**
- **Increased coordination with other agencies**



Key Findings and Recommendations

Infrastructure

Finding:

There is a clear lack of leadership, direction, and vision for EPH in Maryland due to a fragmented organizational structure stretching across multiple state and local agencies

Recommendation:

Establish in statute one lead authority for EPH charged with uniting public health agency and community leaders to ensure accountability and consistency for environmental public health actions



Key Findings and Recommendations

Funding

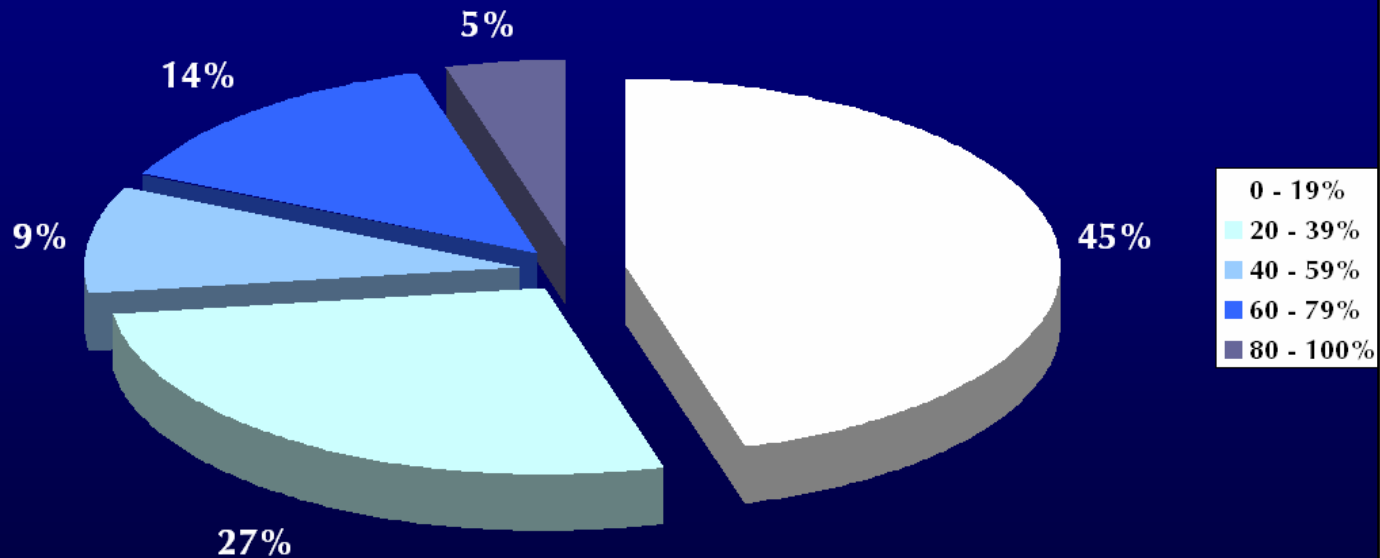
Finding:

EPH services are vulnerable during times of budget shortfalls or unexpected emergencies as no dedicated funding for core EPH services exists

Recommendation:

Create dedicated funding at the state and local levels for core EPH services (e.g. wells, septic systems, food inspections) that are adjusted on a regular basis to meet fluctuating demands and costs

Percent of Total EPH Division Funding Derived From Collection of Fees



For some MD counties, collection of fees for EPH services generates the majority of the division's budget.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Workforce

Finding:

The ability to recruit and retain an environmental public health workforce able to anticipate, respond to, and prevent EPH threats is limited due to a neglected workforce with inadequate compensation and limited career advancement opportunities

Recommendation:

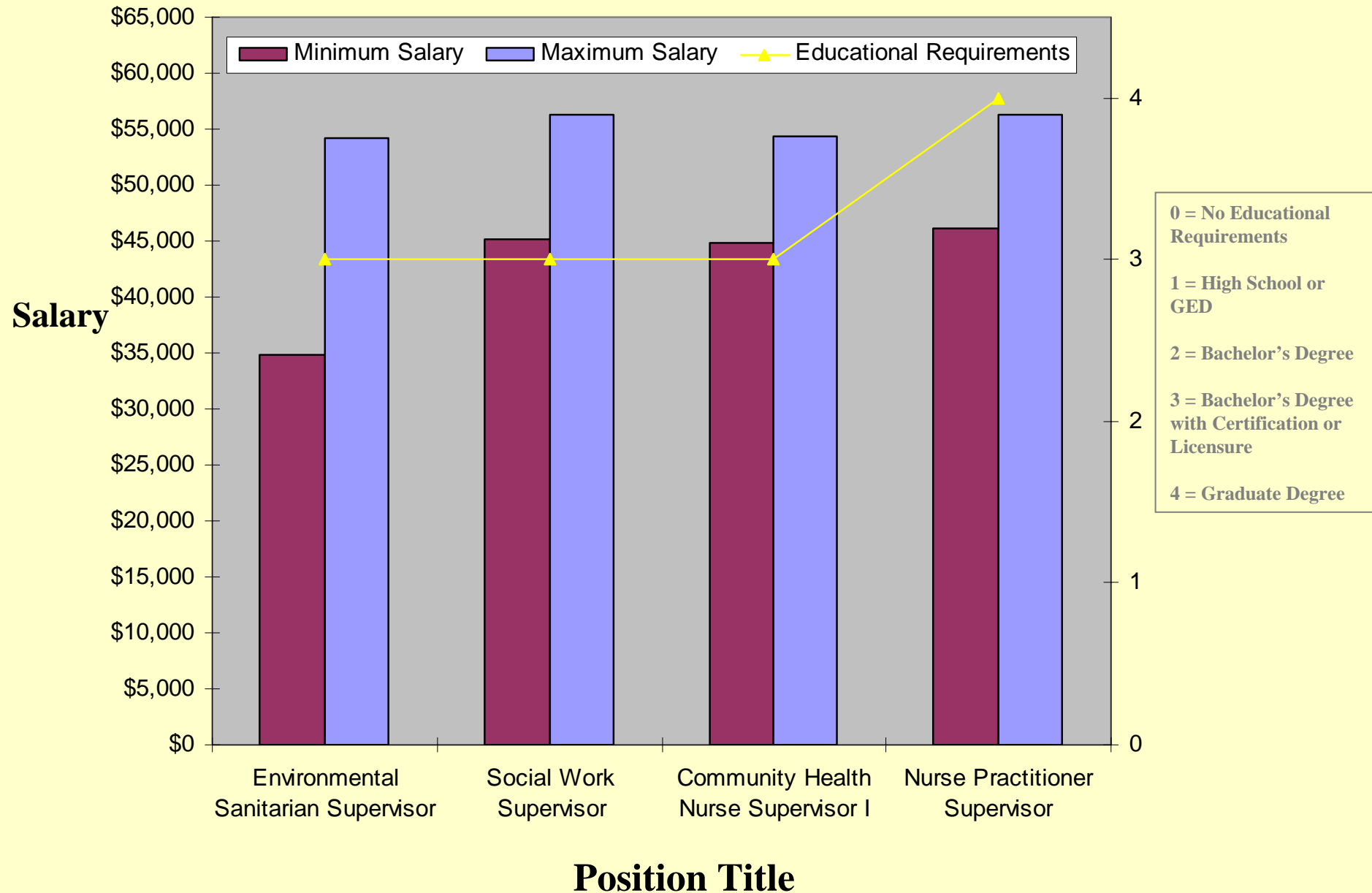
Overhaul EPH job classifications to ensure adequate compensation and career paths for EPH professionals

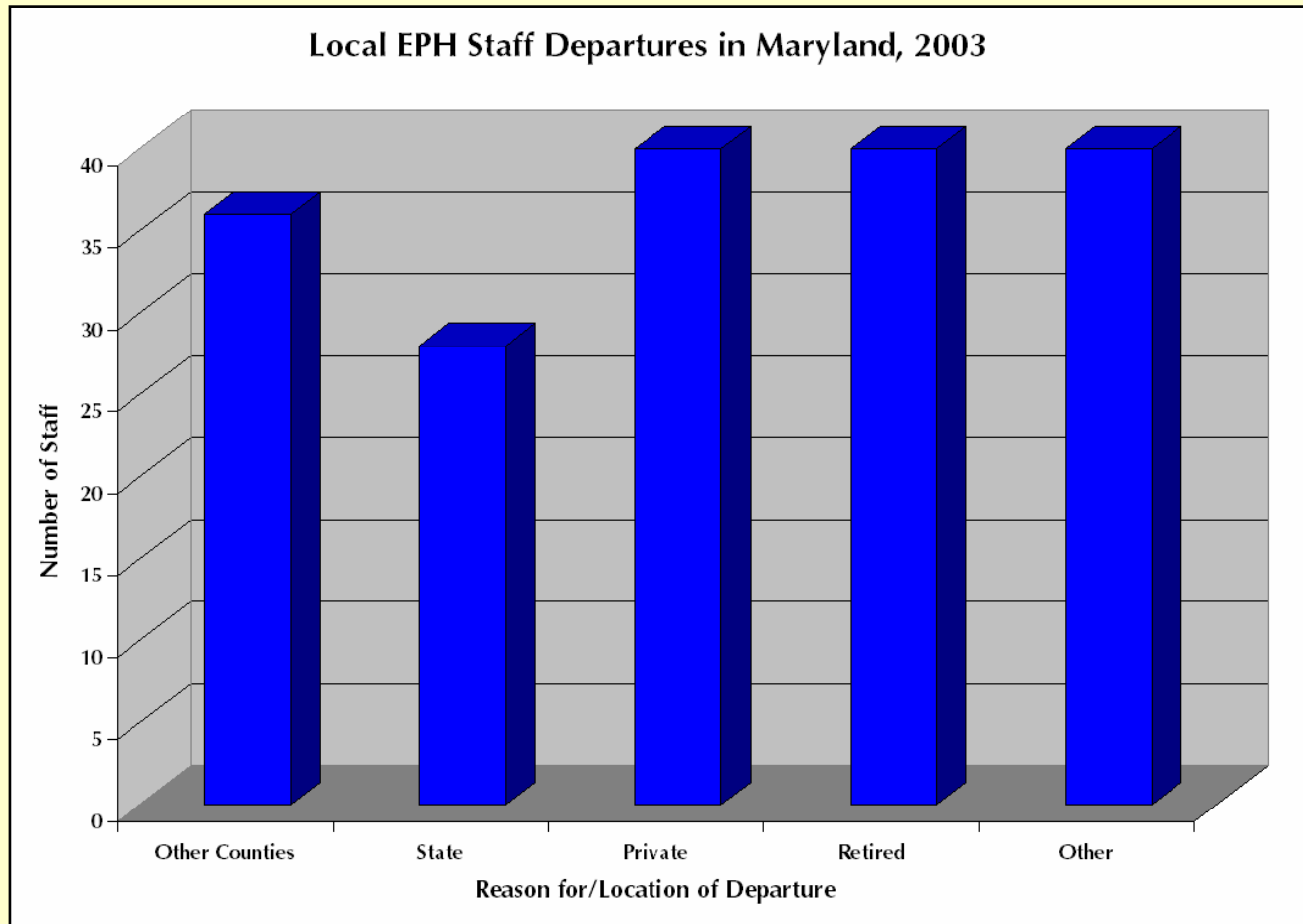


Educational Requirements and Salaries of Entry-Level Maryland Governmental Jobs



Educational Requirements and Salaries of Supervisory Maryland Governmental Jobs





EPH staff departures can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as higher salaries offered in other positions.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Training

Finding:

The ability to address contemporary EPH challenges is limited as training opportunities are lacking and often inadequately address the specific needs of practitioners to meet these challenges

Recommendation:

Provide education and training tailored to meet the needs of EPH practitioners by building and strengthening partnerships with academic institutions and other organizations



Training

- **Legal**
- **Risk communication/assessment**
- **Preparedness**
- **Media-specific**
 - E.g. Indoor air, soil
- **Epidemiology**
- **Technology**

Key Findings and Recommendations

Technology

Finding:

The lack of a coordinated statewide approach and inadequate training and technical support hinder EPH technological advances.

Recommendation:

Develop statewide technology protocols and procedures that include adequate technical support and training

Technology

- **Electronic forms**
- **Internet-based data storage and access**
- **GIS**
- **DHMH network**
 - **Email and satellite downlink systems**
- **Sustainability**
- **Compatibility**
- **IT workforce**

Key Findings and Recommendations

Communication and Collaboration

Finding:

EPH efforts are often hampered by the lack of coordination and communication amongst EPH agencies and communities.

Recommendation:

Provide support to engage community members and state and local public health agencies in the development, implementation, and evaluation of EPH programs and policies.



Key Findings and Recommendations

Responsibility and Authority

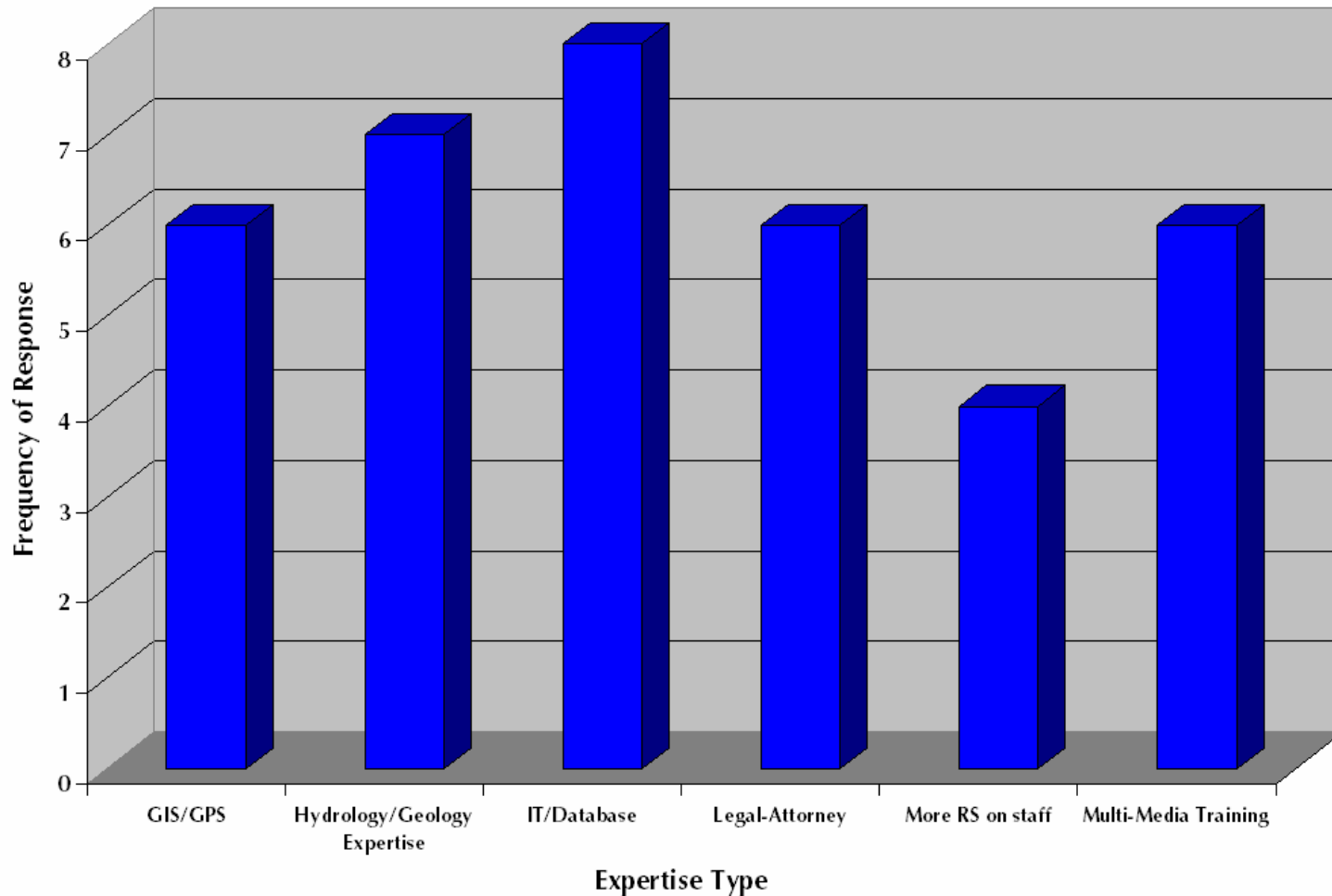
Finding:

Limited legal assistance and varied forms of county government inhibit the development of a consistent statewide approach to the development and enforcement of EPH laws and regulatory provisions.

Recommendation:

Develop statewide protocols and procedures for the development and enforcement of EPH laws and regulatory provisions

What Type Of Expertise Would You Add to Your Staff?



The majority of EPH Directors indicated that information technology and database expertise were ranked first among their needs.

Next Steps

Working with Health Officers and Environmental Health Directors to bring together representatives from the Governor's Office and Maryland Departments of Health and Environment together to address the recommendations



Lessons Learned

- **Collaboration is critical to success**
- **Collaboration takes time**
- **Collaboration offers additional opportunities**

What's The Bottom Line for Tracking??

Challenges:

- Relevance/usefulness to Local Level**
- Raise Visibility of Tracking**
- Training – Technology**
- Local linkage (trust) of Federal/State Agencies**

Opportunities:

- **Health & Environment Linked at Local Level**
- **Benefits of Communication and Support will be widespread**
- **Portals to communities**

Thank You

**For more information and copies of the
report:**

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